



The *One City, One Library* initiative began in 2013 as a response to community need when data revealed that 59% of third graders in the Worcester Public Schools had failed to reach reading proficiency by the third grade. This creative collaboration between the Worcester Public Library and the Worcester Public Schools, with assistance and support from a host of local Foundations placed public library branches in four elementary schools throughout the city. These branches provide extensive collections for the students and teachers of those schools with trained librarians providing access and services - factors that have been shown to correlate with higher scores on reading assessments. During non-school hours, the neighborhoods surrounding these branches benefit from local access to a full suite of library collections, services and programs in addition to access to resources from the extended Central and Western Massachusetts regional library network and connected networks across the state.

A typical weekday at a school-based branch looks like this:

10:00 a.m. – library staff open the branch

10:15 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. – class visits

3:00 - 6:30 p.m. – branch open to the public

Class visits:

A class visit consists of one (sometimes two) classes in a particular grade level coming to the library for a 30-minute visit. During the visit, the librarian will do a read-aloud or a mini-lesson (usually on library skills). After that, students will select books to check out to read in the classroom and/or at home. Students are given special student library cards which have slightly different rules than their public library cards; they allow students to check out two books (only books) per visit. These books are not subject to fines if returned late. Sometimes teachers ask students to check out specific types of books that reinforce a lesson or project taking place in the classroom. Other times, students are encouraged to self-select reading material that interests them. Librarians often help students to find specific books, books on specific topics, or books that are at the right level for the student.

While students are selecting and checking out books, librarians either provide other work (such as word-search puzzles or other learning games), or they provide the

opportunity for kids to read silently or do other classwork, depending upon what the teacher has requested.

Teachers are also provided with special fine-free cards that provide them with additional benefits for school-related checkouts. They allow teachers to place holds on up to 20 copies of one title so that they can create a class set (librarians work with teachers who have larger classes requiring more books). These cards allow extended checkout periods, when needed, of up to 6 weeks. Librarians also work with teachers to provide requested services in support of their curricular objectives.

Public hours:

Once school is finished for the day, the library opens to the public from 3 - 6:30 p.m. (the exception to this is Burncoat where the principal has requested a delayed opening of 3:30 p.m.). During public hours, the library functions the same as any public library branch, providing access to collections and services.

How are we doing?

In 2015, two years into the OCOL project, the Foundation contracted with the UMass Donahue Institute to conduct a study evaluating the project's implementation and impact. The results of their findings regarding student assessment data were inconclusive, primarily because 2014-15 was the first full year of implementation and the number of students included was relatively small. That being said, through other methods of evaluation, such as surveys and interviews, there were indicators pointing to a number of positive outcomes. Educators and parents reported that there were significant impacts on their students in terms of motivating them to read more, helping them find stories they like, helping them to enjoy reading more and helping to improve their reading skills.

The study also provided information on a number of opportunities to increase positive outcomes, including:

- Improving the effectiveness of regularly scheduled library visits for older students, particularly by incorporating read-alouds and library skills lessons.
- Establishing more alignment between curriculum topics and books featured by the library.
- Creating staffing/scheduling solutions to allow classes at the Roosevelt Elementary School to have weekly library visits.
- Extending the benefits of increased library access to other WPS schools so as not to establish a system of haves and have-nots.
- Understanding and addressing the reasons why about half of the elementary students report that they do not visit the library outside of school.

- Attracting community members who do not have a direct relationship with the host school.

In the years since the study was commissioned, we have addressed many of these areas with some success. In the early years of class visits, it was not often that read-alouds were used with students in the older grades (particularly 5th and 6th graders). It may have been that librarians had been trained to focus on picture books for younger children. However, in recent years, staff have increasingly incorporated interesting and engaging read-alouds into class visits with older students.

As librarians have built stronger relationships with the principals and teachers at their schools, the result has been better communication regarding how librarians can assist teachers at all levels, this includes curriculum alignment as well as requests for specific types of lessons and activities for their students. Although teachers and librarians do not have a lot of time to talk about these things during the school day, a recently implemented teacher survey has helped us to increase opportunities for communication.

The schedule at Roosevelt still poses somewhat of a challenge; Roosevelt is the largest school with an OCOL Branch and therefore there are more classes needing class visit times. We have yet to develop a schedule that will allow every class to have a weekly visit, but we are now looking at possibilities for the future that include shorter visits, open access hours, and multiple class visits. In the 2018-19 school year, we are trying the open access model to see if this is a good working solution. Depending upon the feedback we receive, we may try one of the other models next year.

In terms of extending the benefits of increased library access to other WPS schools, we do already send the bookmobile to every elementary school without an OCOL location. However, we realize this does not provide the same level of accessibility as the branches do. The decision to open more OCOL Branches would be something that would require significant funding and increased staffing in order to be viable.

The last two points remain challenges that we continue to try to address. With regard to understanding why elementary students do not visit the library outside of school, we have considered the following possibilities:

- The branches close between school hours and public hours. This has been at the request of the principals in order to ease the congestion of school pickup. We can assume that there are many families who do not want to wait for the library to reopen, nor face the challenge of parking during pickup times.
- In some branches more than others, a significant percentage of the students do not live within walking distance of the school; therefore, a library visit would require transportation. In these cases, lack of transportation would be enough of a barrier to prevent students from visiting the library.
- Since elementary students rely on their parents or caregivers for transportation, working parents may find the limited hours present another barrier.

The final opportunity for growth presented by the UDMI study is the one we have thrown the most effort towards addressing, and yet it remains a significant challenge. Getting the word out to the community that the OCOL locations are branches of the Worcester Public Library that are open to the public is not easy. Here are some of the measures we have taken to try to grow the branches within their neighborhoods:

- Make sure branding and signage is present and highly visible with the WPL logo
- Extend public open hours during school vacations and the summer.
- Send out publicity (bookmarks and flyers) to all students of the school to promote open hours and library programs/events.
- Schedule special programs on Saturdays and cross-promote at other branches.
- Changes in our website to make the presence of the branches more visible online.
- Increase outreach to neighborhood locations and at neighborhood events.
- Increase the use of multiple-location program flyers for events at all locations.
- Change the vernacular used to refer to the OCOL branches.
- Expansion of collections in an effort to bring in adults and other non-student patrons.

We think we are finally making some headway on attracting patrons to these branches; a closer look at each branch may help to make that clear.

Branches by the numbers:

As you look at the numbers below, keep in mind the following factors, which may help explain many of the fluctuations.

- Visitor numbers - tracked using door counters
 - In some locations (particularly Roosevelt), the physical location of these counters has been difficult. They are knocked down by kids waiting in lines in the hallway resulting in frequently broken counters and many days without accurate counts.
 - Door counters originally reset daily. In 2017, after learning that the ARIS- Annual Report Information Survey (a state-wide library statistics survey administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and required for public libraries to receive state aid) wanted only public hours information, we started resetting counters at the beginning and ending of public hours each day thereby tracking two different numbers.
 - Visitor numbers for non-public hours vary greatly from class visit attendance numbers indicating school-related use of the library when the library is technically closed.
- Circulation numbers - tracked through Evergreen, our Integrated Library System (used to catalog and circulate materials)

- Circulation numbers count circulations during both the school day and during public hours. Since school circulation is included, the number of visits has a direct bearing on the circulation figures.
- Now that we have instituted student cards, there should be a way to run reports to separate the student circulation from public circulation. We are looking to make that change, but we will wait for the beginning of next fiscal year to make statistics easier to track.
- In 2017, a change was made in the way the school branches were handling renewals; previously items borrowed on student cards were automatically renewed each week rather than allowing books to remain out for the full loan period. That practice was discontinued which may have resulted in a seemingly lower circulation rate.
- Program numbers - tracked by counting
 - Program attendance is no longer being estimated as previously; we now use a handheld people counter to be more accurate.
 - An overall increase of the average attendance at programs indicates that we are getting better at providing programs that are wanted or needed.
- Class visit numbers - tracked by counting
 - Class visit schedules are created as a collaboration between the library and the school. In certain years, if the schedule is not created as soon as school begins, we see a large difference in the class visit numbers, which in turn also affects the circulation.
 - Class visits can be cancelled for a number of reasons that are out of the library's control including testing, snow days, special school programs, student behavior, or teacher requests. Whenever possible, librarians try to accommodate teacher and principal requests regarding scheduling, including scheduling makeup visits whenever possible.

Roosevelt Branch: Opened October 30, 2013

Roosevelt is our largest branch, and therefore has the largest collection. Its size and delineated sections for smaller children, school age children, and teens, make it an ideal branch for browsing, studying, and staying a while to read, relax, or enjoy other activities. It is the only branch large enough to have a decent play area, which is enjoyed by parents and their children frequently.

| ROOSEVELT | Visitors | School visitors* | Circulation | Programs | Attendance | Avg. | Class visits | Attendance |
|-----------|----------|------------------|-------------|----------|------------|------|--------------|------------|
| 2013 | 7,334 | | 5,386 | 15 | 162 | 11 | 104 | 2,430 |
| 2014 | 32,640 | | 30,090 | 196 | 1,832 | 9 | 430 | 8,716 |
| 2015 | 31,272 | | 29,034 | 246 | 2,307 | 9 | 524 | 10,828 |
| 2016 | 38,379 | | 30,497 | 216 | 2,373 | 11 | 582 | 11,302 |
| 2017 | 30,634 | 5,529 | 27,536 | 134 | 1,544 | 12 | 483 | 10,054 |
| 2018 | 13,108 | 20,224 | 28,040 | 92 | 1,300 | 14 | 563 | 11,651 |
| 2019** | 5,441 | 9,928 | 11,151 | 53 | 996 | 19 | 247 | 7,243 |

*School vs. public hour visitors divided to comply with ARIS requirements

**statistics to date as of May 15, 2019

Roosevelt Notes:

- The numbers are not significantly lower than previous years when public and school time visitors are combined.
- Circulation is up in 2018, and almost as high as it ever was, despite standardizing the renewal process (automatic weekly renewals for student cards discontinued).
- Program attendance in the last two years is down due to having fewer programs (note attendance at each program is dramatically higher). The goal has been to have fewer "passive programs" (just putting out LEGOS, board games, bookmark coloring, etc.) and have more worthwhile, dynamic, public-pleasing programs.

2019-2020 Roosevelt Goals:

I hope that now that we have improved perceptions of what our programs offer (as well as learned what types of programs work, and when) we can offer more numerous programs this year to increase attendance. We are very hopeful that word of mouth regarding our revamped, quality programming will boost the numbers in 2019.

Tatnuck Magnet Branch: Opened November 20, 2013

Tatnuck is generally our busiest branch, in both visitors and circulation. It also has a significant number of adult patrons coming through to pick up holds, which we see less often at other branches. Prior to the advent of OCOL, a community branch was located in Tatnuck, a fact that seems to boost visitor counts as the neighborhood welcomes the return of library services.

| TATNUCK | Visitors | School visitors* | Circulation | Programs | Attendance | Avg. | Class visits | Attendance |
|---------|----------|------------------|-------------|----------|------------|------|--------------|------------|
| 2013 | 3,405 | | 3,159 | 8 | 70 | 8 | 34 | 327 |
| 2014 | 53,487 | | 36,738 | 189 | 3,033 | 16 | 588 | 12,380 |
| 2015 | 55,122 | | 32,104 | 295 | 2,292 | 7 | 593 | 11,899 |
| 2016 | 66,799 | | 35,961 | 155 | 1,796 | 11 | 704 | 15,323 |
| 2017 | 51,065 | 8,148 | 35,741 | 159 | 2,714 | 17 | 426 | 9,158 |
| 2018 | 25,529 | 37,867 | 35,817 | 108 | 1,651 | 15 | 565 | 12,673 |
| 2019** | 15,011 | 12,329 | 12,711 | 59 | 1,170 | 20 | 285 | 5,821 |

*School vs. public hour visitors divided to comply with ARIS requirements

**statistics to date as of May 15, 2019

Tatnuck Notes:

- Both visitors and circulation are up in 2018.
- Program attendance is down, but similar to Roosevelt, we hosted far fewer passive programs, and have seen the number of patrons at each program increase.

2019-2020 Tatnuck Goals:

- Drive program attendance up by simply offering more programs. Programs are generally very well attended here, so the dip in attendance may be related to the decrease in offerings. Particularly now that we have greater financial support from the *Friends of the Worcester Public Library* (a group that assists the library through advocacy, volunteer services and fundraising) and the use of the school's large program room, we will seek to increase program offerings. Large performances and programs have worked very well in the recent months, and we hope to host more.

Goddard Branch: Opened April 9, 2014

Most patrons at Goddard are unaccompanied minors. In the absence of other afterschool/extracurricular activities, children come to this branch as a neighborhood "hang out" for computer use, doing their homework, socializing, playing board games, and attending library programs.

| GODDARD | Visitors | School visitors* | Circulation | Programs | Attendance | Avg. | Class visits | Attendance |
|---------|----------|------------------|-------------|----------|------------|------|--------------|------------|
| 2013 | | | | | | | | |
| 2014 | 44,546 | | 29,093 | 300 | 3,035 | 10 | 437 | 9,539 |
| 2015 | 61,209 | | 30,687 | 259 | 1,760 | 6 | 643 | 13,609 |
| 2016 | 54,819 | | 26,761 | 160 | 1,485 | 9 | 622 | 13,757 |
| 2017 | 44,648 | 8,081 | 24,597 | 127 | 1,627 | 12 | 757 | 15,801 |
| 2018 | 27,316 | 25,766 | 25,477 | 106 | 1,867 | 17 | 751 | 14,754 |
| 2019** | 8,081 | 10,336 | 8,411 | 75 | 978 | 13 | 360 | 6,569 |

*School vs. public hour visitors divided to comply with ARIS requirements

**statistics to date as of May 15, 2019

Goddard Notes:

- When public and school hours are combined, visitors remained static from 2017; down a bit from 2016.
- Circulation is up.
- Program attendance is up, even as program offerings decreased in the years 2014-2017. At this location we have really seen patrons respond to the different types of more engaging programs, and have gained a solid and steady afterschool following.
- Class attendance is also up in the past two years. This seems to be due to the new principal leading a school-wide push to emphasize reading as part of the school culture and as an indispensable part of a student's day.

2019-2020 Goddard Goals:

- Since both circulation and programs are up (and visitors almost static): continue to drive all of these things, but with an emphasis on our underserved tween and teen population. Since we have a group of tweens who attend regularly, we can try to expand our program offerings for that demographic.
- Continue to try to attract families with very young children, a tactic with which we had some success in 2017-2018.

Burncoat Branch: Opened April 15, 2016

Burncoat is the newest, smallest, and quietest branch. It is nestled in a very residential area, with the entrance being hidden in the back of the school's parking lot. Patrons are mostly the school's students returning afterschool (mostly without parents) to play on computers before walking home.

| BURNCOAT | Visitors | School visitors* | Circulation | Programs | Attendance | Avg. | Class visits | Attendance |
|----------|----------|------------------|-------------|----------|------------|------|--------------|------------|
| 2013 | | | | | | | | |
| 2014 | | | | | | | | |
| 2015 | | | | | | | | |
| 2016 | 22,422 | | 10,475 | 99 | 736 | 7 | 243 | 5,081 |
| 2017 | 23,744 | 5,440 | 16,516 | 140 | 1,171 | 8 | 456 | 9,374 |
| 2018 | 17,239 | 21,570 | 15,942 | 89 | 1,105 | 12 | 436 | 8,847 |
| 2019** | 7,305 | 10,178 | 6,082 | 45 | 728 | 16 | 205 | 4,237 |

*School vs. public hour visitors divided to comply with ARIS requirements

**statistics to date as of May 15, 2019

Burncoat Notes:

- Visitors continue to increase every year. However, we are unable to host large programs there, due to its small size and lack of a school multi-purpose room to utilize for such programs. We believe there is a correlation between the inability to host large programs and the inability to drive higher patron counts.
- Circulation has been somewhat static in the last two years. There is a possibility that Burncoat's close proximity to WPL's Great Brook Valley and Frances Perkins branches (in conjunction with the small, limited collection) might hinder further circulation growth.

2019 Burncoat Goals:

- Host more workshop-type programs that yield smaller audiences of under 40 people.
- Utilize the parking lot for larger, outdoor programs when weather appropriate.
- Conduct more early literacy programs, since those generally draw smaller, more focused groups than large all-ages programs and performers.
- Order more DVDs for adults, FPBL and GBV are often out of the in-demand titles. We might get traffic if we have in-demand titles (as we are doing with museum passes).
- *Outreach!* We know outreach works, we just need to do more of it at local preschools, daycares, and perhaps some adult organizations.
- Pre-Summer Reading program letter sent home stating the library is open all summer, but also to remind/inform them that they can get all of their material from the library, too. Burncoat is very much a "neighborhood" library; we are just not sure the neighborhood knows it is more than a child's library.

Since its inception, the OCOL libraries have provided library access to a total of 915,951 public and school visitors. They have provided 11,038 class visits to 231,373 students, and presented 3,325 public programs that 37,732 people have enjoyed. 548,006 books and materials have circulated from the OCOL branches.

The Worcester Public Library will strive to continually improve library services to Worcester Public School students through the *One City, One Library* program. The model of library/school collaboration provides a unique opportunity to leverage resources that address the needs of the students while also providing extended public library services throughout surrounding neighborhoods. School libraries and easy access to reading materials contribute to a culture of reading, an outcome that helps build lifelong learners. By providing students and families with engaging, high quality print and digital materials, our libraries and our librarians encourage learners and help prepare them for continued educational success.